

As part of our Arts in Science Workshop on Sunday, 18 November 2018, local photographer Ockert le Roux will present a lecture and practical tips on how to achieve macro and close-up photographic results, using insects as subjects.

For those who have suitable equipment to conduct macro photography, you are welcome to bring them along and participate by implementing the techniques taught.

A DSLR or mirrorless camera for “general” photography may not exactly be suitable for Macro Photography, so it is important to understand some of the technical specifications or features of some DSLRs so that you don’t making the wrong choice. Choosing a DSLR for Macro Photography depends on your budget and shooting style. Also, you don’t really need the highest-end DSLR bodies to take great Macro Shots, as skill and knowledge are more important at the end of the day! When you do purchase any equipment, please seek professional advice to ensure you make the correct decisions.

I will only be suggesting Canon and Nikon DSLR line-ups. These two brands are usually the ones to go for in Macro Photography regardless of whether you are a beginner, enthusiast or professional. I’m sure you already know that Canon and Nikon are the largest brands in the photography world, offering a dizzying array of lenses and accessories. The user communities are equally large, meaning that you will likely receive better and faster support than other brands. A good DSLR body should have:

1. A good sensor. The bigger the sensor, the better the images. But the bigger the sensor, the more expensive the DSLR. Another article will be written to discuss whether an APS-C or FF DSLR is better for Macro Photography, so please stay tune for that one!
2. High Megapixel (MP) counts. Higher MP counts will provide more details when paired with a good sensor- suitable for cropping in Macro Photography. The higher the MP count, the better the DSLR for Macro Photography.
3. Size, weight, ergonomics and ease-of-use. A light-weight and small DSLR will be less tiring to carry and operate, but will generally have more crowded or smaller buttons and grips that affect comfort.
4. Weather sealing. A DSLR with weather sealing can tolerate rough weather every once in a while, but this feature is generally limited to semi-pro to professional level DSLR bodies, which can be relatively expensive.

Recommended DSLR cameras

Canon– 60D, 600D, 700D, 750D, 5DS

Nikon - D5200, D5300, D5500, D5600, D3300, D3400, D7200, D800, D810 or D850

Lens choice

Use a macro-specific fixed lens. Unlike ordinary lenses, macro lenses enable you to shoot at very close distances to your subject while still achieving sharp focus. Most macro lenses get you close enough to capture a 1:1 magnification ratio. This means your subject appears life-size on your camera’s digital sensor. Before you acquire a macro lens, please make sure the lens is compatible with your specific camera body. There are also other cheaper options such as using extension tubes and reversing rings to change a normal lens into a macro lens at the fraction of the cost

layout of a macro lens. I will talk to these options, so please don't rush out and buy them before the time.

Recommended Canon lenses

- Canon EF 100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM
- Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 Macro USM Lens
- Canon MP-E 65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro Lens
- Canon EF 180mm f/3.5L Macro USM
- Canon EF-S 60mm f/2.8 Macro USM lens
- Sigma 105mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM Macro
- Tamron SP 90mm f/2.8 Di Macro Auto-focus Lens
- Tamron SP 90mm f/2.8 Di Macro 1:1 VC USD lens for Canon EF
- Sigma 70mm f/2.8 DG Macro Art lens for Canon EF
- Sigma 150mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM APO Macro lens

Recommended Nikon lenses

- Nikon macro Nikon Micro-Nikkor 105mm f/2.8
- Nikon AF-S Micro-Nikkor 105 mm 1:2.8G VR
- Nikon AF-S DX Micro-Nikkor 40mm 1:2.8G
- Nikon AF-S Micro-Nikkor 60mm 1:2.8G ED
- Nikon AF Micro-NIKKOR 200mm F/4D IF-ED Lens
- Tamron 90mm f/2.8 Di Macro VC USD
- Sigma 105mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM Macro Lens
- Sigma 180mm f/2.8 APO Macro EX DG OS HSM Lens
- Tamron 90mm f/2.8 SP AF Di Macro Lens
- Sigma 150mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM APO Macro Lens (Nikon)

If you are a seasoned macro photographer and you have other specialised equipment such as focus rails, LED lights, focus-stacking software etc., please feel welcome to bring them along. I will concentrate on the basics and we won't have time to cover all aspects of macro photography.

Look forward seeing you all on the day.